



Closing a sale

If you are a sales professional or an entrepreneur, you know that closing a sale can be a great challenge which sometimes hangs by a thread. Still, while some of the businesspeople I have met during my career have several techniques they use to increase their success, others are struggling to discover what works best for them. So, if you're working on improving your results as a salesperson, here are some tips which should guide you through the process of closing a sale:

1. Identify the decision-maker. The secret to staying efficient and sealing the deal is focusing your efforts on the right person. Often the person asking for a quote might have little to no say in actually choosing the supplier or approving the price. Depending on the size of the company (in b2b) or the project (in b2c), you should always try to understand people's roles and look at the bigger picture. Good salespeople find out who the decision-maker is and target their needs. For example, a Marketing Manager might be interested in how your product helps them move ahead of the competition and focus on creative criteria, while a Purchasing Officer will pay more attention to costs, commercial terms and warranties. To make the right person say "yes", adapting your approach to the decision-maker is vital.
2. Don't ever forget that your objective is closing the deal. From that first interaction to the last meeting or email, always treat that prospect as a buyer and never lose track of your goal. Send them a well-organized quote, a presentation, make a pitch, give them the proper arguments. It often happens that, when trying to go



that extra mile for a customer, sales representatives start discussing other matters, or make small talk, to ensure that the prospect is feeling comfortable. That is great, as it helps people trust you, but going too far will make you lose both the sale and your time. Be charming, be open, but always take the conversation where you need it to go to get yourself a deal.

3. Build chemistry. In today's world, consumers have several suppliers to choose from, as they range from expensive, to affordable, from top quality, to lower standards. No matter what you are looking for, you will discover there is a wide list of options for every pocket and taste. What makes the difference today is how you interact with the customer, whether you earn his trust and portray yourself as the reasonable, reliable professional he needs. Sales are closed not between companies, but between people who value one another, so, for the best results, meet with your prospects and show them why they should choose you.
4. Find the right moment to close. As a sales person, you need to read people and find the best moments to guide them towards accepting your offer. This means that you should wait until you feel you have made your point and they have no objections, to direct them towards saying "yes". Otherwise, they will feel pressured and reject anything you recommend them. On the other hand, if you wait for too long, you will lose the sale. The best way is to always pay attention to the customer's reactions and adapt your behaviour to theirs.
5. Keep your cool. If you want to be convincing, you need to be confident. This is a sign that you believe in the quality of your offering and that you are a successful professional. Speak calmly, don't fluster and don't get anxious. Trying to twist



your customer's arm will make you look insecure and unprofessional, so don't try attracting people through time-limited discounts or deals. An approach like "Sign today and get 10% off" is not an option when you want to present yourself as a trustworthy, reliable business person. Leave this sort of thing to haggle with if absolutely necessary.

6. Mind your body language. Making eye contact, standing straight and keeping your hands in sight are details which make you look confident and honest and which increase the chances of selling, so, when you meet with a client, always be sure to pay attention to what your body says about you.
7. Show your customers that you care about their needs. To do so, ask them questions which enable you to understand their situation and the problems they are facing. Focusing on what they need will make them feel empowered and trust the fact that you are looking after them, which will, eventually, determine them to accept your offer.
8. Don't exaggerate on the up-selling. We all have sales plans, but we need to understand that our potential customers are not responsible for them. This means that you shouldn't force people to buy more than what they need, as, in the long run, this will only ruin your image and affect your credibility.
9. Don't underestimate your customer. From the beginning until the end of the sales process, always treat your customer with fairness and respect. People hate feeling like they are being lied to and, most likely, at the first sign of deceit, your prospect will turn his back on you.



10. Promote these principles among your sales team, as well. For the best outcomes, your colleagues need to understand that their job is a fun, rewarding one, where they help people find the best solutions for their needs. So, if you wish to increase revenue, ensure the sales process leaves behind satisfies customers and interested prospects which generate good word-of-mouth.

These are my top 10 pieces of advice on how to close a sale. Follow them one by one, to drive more business and improve your business behaviour.

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Handling Objections

If you think customer objections are hurting your sales process, it means you are doing sales all wrong. Voicing concerns is actually the best thing that a prospect can do for you. This way, you have a chance to address your customers' worries and give them the proper arguments to take you up on your offer. So, instead of getting frustrated with every objection, try making the most of them by following these top tips:

1. First of all, thank prospects for mentioning their objections and declare yourself interested to discussing all their concerns. A fair, professional attitude will make them more open towards hearing you out and will encourage them to talk to you. Communication is very important when determining the outcome of a sales pitch, so make sure your prospect knows you are there to walk them through the process of finding the best product for their needs.
2. Listen before you speak. Do not interrupt potential customers when they tell you their point of view, as it suggests you are not interested in their well-being, but in selling your products at any cost. Pay attention to what people have to say and, only after, reply. This way, you will adapt your speech to their feedback and they will feel more connected to you.
3. Start a dialogue. Taking the initiative and asking prospects whether they are preoccupied with more than what they are letting show will help you discover even more issues which they didn't want to voice. So don't be afraid to identify your offer's weaknesses, as this will help you update your pitch in a way that is



convincing and relevant to the potential buyer. Don't encourage your customer to hide his concerns under a rug, because they will only end up dismissing your offer. Talk things through, ask follow-up questions and find the best solution for your customer.

4. Be insightful, without being pushy. When prospects mention their concerns, you should always try to showcase how your products / services overcome them and how they bring added value to their situation. Your goal should be to make relevant people understand why your offer is the right one for them. Don't focus on selling at any cost, make them realize they want and need your product / service. It is only after that they will buy it.

To practice the tactics I mentioned above, let's have a look at some examples of situations that we, salespeople, often deal with:

1. "Your product / service is too expensive" / "Your product / service is more expensive than what the competition is offering". Price objections are the most common in sales, given the fact that we all want to get the best value for our money. Any purchase is a result of an overall comparison of commercial terms, which include price, deadlines, warranties etc. In these kinds of situations my recommendation is not to offer a big discount, as this would only make your prospect lose trust in your company and services. If someone considers your product too expensive, then try emphasizing how they benefit from it and how much money they are saving on the long run. If you are more expensive than the competition, ask them to allow you to make a comparison analysis of the other party's offers. Showcase what you offer extra, how your quality is higher than



what the others offer. Make your client understand that quality lasts longer and is a better investment on the long run.

2. "I am not interested in what you are offering" / "I don't need your product / service" . If you feel that there is actual business potential there, then tell your prospect a success story of a company / customer in a similar situation, emphasizing how they benefited from your work. Being allowed to mention names and give references is a huge plus, in this case, as it will increase your chances of getting trusted with the project. To be prepared, always ask your satisfied customers whether they allow you to use their names.
3. "We'll consider/discuss your offer and let you know" . When your client mentions this, it means that you haven't gained their trust yet and that they need some time to do their own research and see what other options they have. In this case it's time to review your offer's strengths and show them how they benefit from working with you. Moreover, offering a guarantee might be a good idea, as well, since it will make them fear less about making the wrong decision. After you have presented them with all the details, ask how much time they need and set a date when you should follow-up.
4. "It's not exactly what we need" / "It's not what we were looking for". Sit your customer down and talk to them about their needs. Discuss how your product/service answers each one and make sure you don't try to push any unnecessary features on them. Update your offer, if necessary.



5. "I'm not the one making the call" / "My manager will be deciding". When someone gives you this argument, ensure you reach the decision-makers. Ask your contact to organize a short meeting with the person who will be choosing the supplier, to give you a chance to identify the perfect solution for the company.

Although customer objections might seem like a barrier which stands between you and a closed deal, keep in mind that they can be solved to your advantage if you treat them with professionalism, as the opportunity that they are. By taking your customer's concerns into account and answering them, you turn the sales process into a dialogue which increases your chances of driving business your way.